



## **FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG OF HEART**

(Extracts from Maria Valtorta's "The Poem of the Man-God")

*These passages highlight the great love Jesus has for children, their wonderful unspoilt qualities, and the joy and comfort they gave Him during His public life on earth.*

*[According to the decree of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, AAS 58, 1186, approved by Pope Paul VI on October 14th 1966, it is permitted to publish, without a Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur, works relating to private revelations, prophecies and miracles etc., provided that they contain nothing which contravenes faith and morals.*

*This compilation, therefore, has credibility only as human testimony and is not intended to represent the opinion of the Church. The compiler wishes to affirm submission to the final and official judgement of the Church regarding the visions and dictations contained in these extracts.]*

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for the  
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## THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

(Vol. 1, p. 147-55)

*(Maria Valtorta describes the vision she sees...)*

I see a very wide country. The moon is at its zenith, and she is sailing smoothly in a sky crowded with stars. They look like diamond studs, fixed to a huge canopy of dark blue velvet, and the moon is smiling in the middle of them, with her big white face, from which streams of light descend and make the earth white. The barren trees seem taller and darker, against so white a ground, whereas the low walls, which rise here and there on the boundaries, look as white as milk - and a little house far away seems a block of Carrara marble.

On my right I see a place enclosed by a thorn-bush hedge on two sides, and by a low rugged wall on the other two. The wall supports a kind of low wide shed, which inside the enclosure is built in masonry and part in wood, as if in summer the wooden part should be removed and the shed should become a porch. From the enclosure, intermittent short bleatings can be heard now and again. It must be the little sheep, which dream or perhaps sense that it is almost daybreak, because of the very bright moonlight. The brightness is intense to an excessive degree, and it is increasing more and more - as if the planet was coming near the earth, or was sparkling because of a mysterious fire.

A shepherd looks out of the door, and lifting one arm to his forehead to shield his eyes, he looks up. It seems improbable that one should protect one's eyes from moonlight. But the moonlight in this case is so bright that it blinds people, particularly those who come out from a dark enclosure. Everything is calm. But the bright moonlight is surprising. The shepherd calls his companions. They all come to the door: a group of hairy men of various ages. Some are just teenagers; some are already white haired. They comment on the strange event, and the younger ones are afraid. One in particular, a boy about twelve years old, starts crying, and the older shepherds jeer at him.

« What are you afraid of, you fool? » the oldest man says to him... But the little shepherd is no longer listening to him. He looks as if he is no longer frightened, because he leaves the threshold, and steals from behind the shoulders of a brawny herdsman, behind whom he had previously sought shelter, and goes out on to the grassy fold in front of the shed. He looks up and walks about like a sleep-walker or one hypnotised by something that compellingly attracts him. At a certain moment he shouts: « Oh! » and remains petrified, with his arms slightly stretched out. His mates look at one another dumbfounded.

« But what is the matter with the fool? » says one.

« I will send him back to his mother tomorrow. I don't want mad people as guardians of the sheep » says another.

And the old man who had spoken earlier says: « Let us go and see before we judge him. Call also the others who are sleeping, and bring your sticks. It might be a wild animal or some robber... »

They go in, they call the other shepherds, and they come out with torches and clubs. They join the boy.

« There, there » he whispers smiling. « Above the tree, look at the light that is coming. It seems to be coming on the ray of the moon. There it is, it is coming near. How beautiful it is! »

« I can only see a rather brighter light. »

« So can I. »

« So can I » say the others.

« No. I see something like a body » says one....

« It is... it is an angel » shouts the boy. « Here he is, he is coming down, he is coming near... Down! On your knees before the angel of God! »

A long and venerable « Oh! » comes from the group of shepherds, who fall down face to the ground, and the older they are, the more they appear to be crushed by the... apparition. The young ones are on their knees, looking at the angel who is coming nearer and nearer, and then he stops mid-air above the enclosure wall, waving his large wings, a pearly brightness in the white moonlight surrounding him.

« Do not fear. I am not bringing you misfortune. I announce to you a great joy for the people of Israel, and for all the people of the world. » The angelic voice is the harmony of a harp and of singing nightingales.

« Today, in the City of David, the Saviour has been born. » In saying so, the angel spreads out his wings wider and wider, moving them as a sign of overwhelming joy, and a stream of golden sparks and precious stones seem to fall from them: a real rainbow describing a triumphal arch above the poor shed.

«... the Saviour, who is Christ. » The angel shines with a brighter light. His two wings, now motionless, pointed upright towards the sky like two still sails on the sapphire of the sea, seem two bright flames ascending to Heaven.

«... Christ, the Lord! » The angel gathers his sparkling wings and covers himself with them as if they were a coat of diamonds on a dress of pearls, he bows down in adoration, with his arms crossed over his heart, while his head, bent down as it is, disappears in the shade of the tops of the folded wings. Only an oblong bright motionless form can be seen for a few moments.

But now he stirs. He spreads out his wings, lifts his head, bright with a heavenly smile, and says: « You will recognise Him from the following signs: in a poor stable, behind Bethlehem, you will find a baby in swaddling clothes, in a manger for animals, because no roof was found for the Messiah in the city of David. » The angel becomes grave, almost sad, in saying that.

But from the Heavens many angels - oh! how many! - come down, all like him - a ladder of angels descending and rejoicing and dimming the moonlight with their heavenly brightness. They all gather round the announcing angel, fluttering their wings, exhaling perfumes, playing notes in which the most beautiful voices of creation find a recollection, but elevated to uniform perfection. If painting is the expression of matter to become light, here melody is the expression of music to give men a hint of the beauty of God. To hear this melody, is to know Paradise, where everything is harmony of love, which emanates from God to make the blessed souls happy, and then from them returns to God to say to Him: « We love You! »

The angelical « Glory » spreads throughout the quiet country in wider and wider circles, and the bright light with it. And the birds join their singing to greet the early light, and the sheep add their bleatings for the early sun. But... I love to believe that the animals are greeting their Creator, Who has come down among them to love them, both as a Man and as God.

The singing slowly fades away, as well as the light, and the angels ascend to Heaven...

The shepherds come back to reality.

« Did you hear? »

« Shall we go and see? »

« And what about the animals? »

« Oh! Nothing will happen to them! We are going to obey God's word! »

« But where shall we go? »

« Didn't he say that He was born today? And that they did not find lodgings in Bethlehem?... Come with me, I know where He is. I saw the woman (earlier) and I felt sorry for Her. I told them where to go, for Her sake, because I thought they might not

find lodgings, and I gave the man some milk for Her. She is so young and beautiful, and She must be as good and kind as the angel who spoke to us. Come. Let us go and get some milk, cheese, lambs and tanned hides. They must be very poor... and I wonder how cold He must be - Whose name I dare not mention! And imagine! I spoke to the Mother as I would have spoken to a poor wife! »

They go into the shed and they come out shortly afterwards, some with little flasks of milk, some with little nets interwoven with esparto containing small whole round cheeses, some with baskets, each containing a little bleating lamb and some with tanned hides.

« I am taking them a sheep. She lambed a month ago. Her milk is very good. It will be useful if the woman should have no milk. She seemed a young girl to me and so pale! A jasmine face in moonlight » says the shepherd who gave the milk. And he leads them.

They set out in the moonlight, aided by their torches, after closing the shed and the enclosure. They go along country paths, among thorn-bush hedges stripped by winter.

They go round Bethlehem. They reach the stable... (and) go near the hole.

« Go in! »

« I wouldn't dare! »

« You go in! »

« No. »

« At least have a look. »

« You, Levi, who saw the angel first, obviously because you are better than we are, look in. » Before they said he was mad... but now it suits them if he dares what they do not.

The boy hesitates, but then he makes up his mind. He goes near the hole, pulls the mantle a little to one side, looks... and remains enraptured.

« What can you see? » they ask him anxiously in low voices.

« I can see a beautiful young woman and a man, bending over a manger, and I can hear... I can hear a little baby crying, and the woman is speaking to Him in a voice... oh! what a voice! »

« What is She saying? »

« She is saying: "Jesus, little one! Jesus, love of Your Mummy! Don't cry, little Son". She is saying: "Oh! If I could only say to You: 'Take some milk, little one'. But I have not got any yet". She says: "You are so cold, My love! And the hay is stinging You! How painful it is for Your Mummy to hear You crying so, without being able to help You!" She says: "Sleep, soul of Mine! Because it breaks My heart to hear You crying and see Your tears!" and She kisses Him, and She must be warming His little feet with Her hands, because She is bent with Her arms in the manger. »

« Call Her! Let them hear you. »

« I won't. You should call Her, because you brought us here and you know Her! »

The shepherd opens his mouth, but he only utters a faint moaning noise.

Joseph turns round and comes to the door. « Who are you? »

« Shepherds. We brought you some food and some wool. We have come to worship the Saviour. »

« Come in. »

They go in, and the stable becomes brighter because of the light of the torches. The older men push the young ones in front of them.

Mary turns round and smiles. « Come » She says. « Come! », and She invites them with Her hand and Her smile, and She takes the boy who saw the angel, and She draws him to Herself, against the manger. And the boy looks, and is happy.

The others, invited also by Joseph, move forward with their gifts, and they place them at Mary's feet with few deep-felt words. They then look at the Baby Who is weeping a little, and they smile moved and happy.

And one of them, somewhat bolder than the rest, says: « Mother, take this wool. It's soft and clean. I prepared it for my child who is about to be born. But I offer it to You. Lay your Son in this wool. It will be soft and warm. » And he offers the sheep hide, a beautiful hide, well covered with white soft wool.

Mary lifts Jesus, and puts it round Him. And She shows Him to the shepherds, who, kneeling on the hay on the ground, look at Him ecstatically!

They become bolder, and one suggests: « He should be given a mouthful of milk, better still, some water and honey. But we have no honey. We give it to little babies. I have seven children, and I know... »

« There is some milk here. Take it, Woman. »

« But it is cold. It should be warm. Where is Elias? He has the sheep. »

Elias must be the shepherd who gave the milk. But he is not there. He remained outside and is looking from the hole, but he cannot be seen in the dark night.

« Who led you here? »

« An angel told us to come, and Elias showed us the way. But where is he now? »

The sheep declares his presence with a bleat.

« Come in. You are wanted. »

He enters with his sheep, embarrassed because they all look at him.

« It's you! » says Joseph, who recognizes him, and Mary smiles at him saying: « You are good. »

They milk the sheep and with the hem of a piece of linen, dipped into the warm creamy milk, Mary moistens the lips of the Baby, who sucks the sweet cream. They all smile, and even more so, when Jesus falls asleep in the warmth of the wool, with the little bit of linen still between His lips.

« But You can't stay here. It's cold and damp. And... there is too strong a smell of animals. It's not good... it's not good for the Saviour. »

« I know » replies Mary with a deep sigh. « But there is no room for us in Bethlehem. »

« Take heart, Woman. We will look for a house for You. »

« I will tell my mistress » says Elias. « She is good. She will receive You, even if she had to give You her own room. As soon as it is daylight, I will tell her. Her house is full of people. But she will find room for You. »

« For My Child, at least. Joseph and I can lie also on the floor. But for the Little One... »

« Don't worry, Woman. I will see to it. And we will tell many people what we were told. You will lack nothing. For the time being, take what our poverty can give You. We are shepherds... »

« We are poor, too. And we cannot reward you » says Joseph.

« Oh! We don't want it. Even if You could afford it, we would not want it. The Lord has already rewarded us. He promised peace to everybody. The angels said: "Peace to men of good will". But He has already given it to us, because the angel said that this Child is the Saviour, who is Christ, the Lord. We are poor and ignorant, but we know that the Prophets say that the Saviour will be the Prince of Peace. And he told us to come and adore Him. That is why He gave us His peace. Glory be to God in the Most-High Heaven, and glory to His Christ here, and You are blessed, Woman, Who gave birth to Him: You are holy, because You deserved to bear Him! Give us orders as our Queen, because we will be happy to serve You. What can we do for You? »

« You can love My Son, and always cherish the same thoughts as you have now. »

« But what about You? Is there anything You wish? Have You no relatives whom You would like to inform that He has been born? »

« Yes, I have them. But they are far away. They are at Hebron... »

« I will go » says Elias. « Who are they? »

« Zacharias, the priest, and My cousin Elizabeth. »

« Zacharias? Oh! I know him well. In summer I go up those mountains, because the pastures are rich and beautiful, and I am a friend of his shepherd. When I know you are settled, I will go to Zacharias. »

« Thank you, Elias. »

« You need not thank me. It is a great honour for me, a poor shepherd, to go and speak to the priest and say to him: "The Saviour has been born". »

« No. You must say to him: "Your cousin, Mary of Nazareth, has said that Jesus has been born, and that you should come to Bethlehem". »

« I will say that. »

« May God reward You. I will remember you, Elias, and every one of you. »

« Will You tell Your Baby about us? »

« I certainly will. »

« I am Elias. »

« And I am Levi. »

« And I am Samuel. »

« And I Jonah. »

« And I Isaac. »

« And I Tobias. »

« And I Jonathan. »

« And I Daniel. »

« And I Simeon. »

« My name is John. »

« I am Joseph and my brother Benjamin, we are twins. »

« I will remember your names. »

« We must go... But we will come back... And we will bring others to worship Him. »

« How can we go back to the sheep-fold, leaving the Child? »

« Glory be to God Who has shown Him to us! »

« Will You let us kiss His dress? » asks Levi, with an angelic smile.

And Mary lifts Jesus slowly, and sitting on the hay, envelops the tiny little feet in a linen, and offers them to be kissed. And the shepherds bow down to the ground and kiss the tiny feet, veiled by the linen. Those with a beard clean it first; almost everyone is crying, and when they have to go, they walk out backwards, leaving their hearts there...

The vision ends thus, with Mary sitting on the straw with the Child on Her lap, and Joseph, who, leaning with his elbow on the manger, looks and adores.

## **JESUS NAMES A LITTLE BABY**

**(Vol. 1, p. 399-402)**

*(It is thirty years later. Shortly after commencing His public life, Jesus goes searching for the shepherds who adored Him at His Birth in Bethlehem. The first shepherds whom he finds, lead Him to Isaac, who has been crippled and bedridden for many years, in the town of Juttah. Isaac is overjoyed to see Jesus, and Jesus cures him of his illness. Isaac then takes Jesus, the other shepherds, and some of*

*His disciples to a family he knows, whose mother and father are Sarah and Joachim, and who have called their first three children Mary, Joseph and Immanuel...)*

One can hear a lot of shouting from the house. Isaac walks in front of them all. He goes in. He calls at the top of his voice: « Mary, Joseph, Immanuel! Where are you? Come to Jesus. »

Three little ones run: a girl about five years old, and two little boys, about four and two years of age, the latter still somewhat uncertain when walking. They are dumbfounded when they see the... revived man. Then the little girl shouts: « Isaac! Mummy! Isaac is here! »

A woman comes out of a room, where there is a lot of noisy shouting... « Isaac!... But you are walking! What happened? »

« The Saviour! Oh! Sarah! He is here! He has come! »

« Who? Jesus of Nazareth? Where is He? »

« Over there! Behind the walnut-tree, and He wishes to know if you will receive Him! »

« Joachim! Mother! Come here, all of you! The Messiah is here! »

Women, men, boys, little ones run out shouting and yelling... but when they see Jesus, tall and stately, they lose heart and become petrified.

« Peace to this house and to you all. The peace and blessing of God. » Jesus walks slowly, smiling, towards the group. « My friends: will you give hospitality to the Wayfarer? » and He smiles even more.

His smile overcomes all fears. The husband takes heart: « Come in, Messiah. We have loved You before meeting You. We shall love You more after meeting You. The house is celebrating today for three reasons: for You, for Isaac and for the circumcision of my third son. Bless him, Master. Woman, bring the baby! Come in, my Lord. »

They go into a room decorated for the feast. There are tables with foodstuffs, carpets and branches everywhere.

Sarah comes back with a lovely new-born baby in her arms. She presents him to Jesus.

« May God be always with him. What is his name? »

« No name yet. This is Mary, this is Joseph, this is Immanuel... but this one has no name yet... »

Jesus looks at the parents, who are close to each other, He smiles: « Find a name, if he is to be circumcised today... » They look at each other, they look at Him, they open their mouths and close them again without saying anything. Everyone is paying attention.

Jesus insists: « The history of Israel has so many great, sweet, blessed names. The sweetest and most blessed ones have already been given. But perhaps there are still some left. »

The parents cry out together: « Yours, Lord! » and the mother adds: « But it is too holy... »

Jesus smiles and asks: « When will he be circumcised? »

« We are waiting for the circumciser. »

« I will be present at the ceremony. And in the meantime, I wish to thank you for what you have done for My Isaac. He no longer needs the help of good people. But good people still need God. You called your third son: God be with us. But you had God with you ever since you were charitable to My servant. May you be blessed. Your charity will be remembered in Heaven and on the earth. »

« Is Isaac going away now? Is he leaving us? »

« Is that upsetting you? But he must serve his Master. But he will come, and so will I. In the meantime, you will speak of the Messiah... There is so much to be said to convince the world! But here is the person you are expecting. »

A pompous personage comes in with a servant. There are greetings and low bows. « Where is the child? » he asks with haughtiness.

« He is here. But greet the Messiah. He is here. »

« The Messiah! The one who cured Isaac? I heard about it. But.. We will talk about it after. I am in a great hurry. The child and his name. »

The people present are mortified by the man's manners. But Jesus smiles as if the impoliteness was not addressed to Him. He takes the baby, He touches his little forehead with His beautiful fingers, as if He wanted to consecrate him and says: « His name is Jesai » and He hands him back to his father, who goes into another room with the haughty man and other people. Jesus remains where He was until they come back with the child, who is screaming desperately.

« Woman, give Me the child. He will not cry any longer » He says to comfort the distressed mother. In fact, the child, once he is laid on Jesus' knees, is silent.

Jesus forms a group of His own, with the little ones around Him, and also the shepherds and disciples. The sheep that Elias has put in an enclosure are bleating outside. There is the noise of a party in the house. They bring sweets and drinks to Jesus. But Jesus hands them out to the little ones.

« Are You not drinking, Master? Will You not have anything. We are offering it warmly. »

« I know, Joachim, and I accept wholeheartedly. But let Me make the little ones happy first. They are My joy... »

« Pay no attention to that man, Master. »

« No, Isaac. I will pray that he may see the Light. John, take the two little boys to see the sheep. And you, Mary, come closer to Me and tell Me: Who am I? »

« You are Jesus, the Son of Mary of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem. Isaac saw You and he gave me the name of Your Mother, that I may be good. »

« To imitate Her, you must be as good as an angel of God, purer than a lily that blooms on top of a mountain, as pious as the holiest Levite. Will you be like that? »

« Yes, Jesus, I will. »

Judas says: « Say: Master or Lord, little girl. »

« Let her call Me with My name, Judas. Only when it is uttered by innocent lips, it does not lose the sound that it has on My Mother's lips. Everybody, throughout future centuries, will mention that name, some because of an interest or other, some to curse it. Only innocent people, without any interest and any hatred, will pronounce it with the same love as this little girl and My Mother. Also, sinners will invoke Me, because they need mercy. But My Mother and the little ones! Why do you call Me Jesus? » He asks, caressing the little girl.

« Because I love You... as I love my father, mother and my little brothers » she says, embracing Jesus' knees, and smiling with her head turned upwards.

And Jesus bends down and kisses her... and it all ends.

## **LITTLE ASR1EL**

**(Vol. 1, p. 709)**

*(It is nearing the end of the first year of Jesus' public life. He is His disciples and a large crowd of people to be simple and uncomplicated in how they speak...)*

« ... And you will receive great reward in Heaven for it. I say to you: be spontaneous like a child who by instinct goes towards him whom he perceives to be good without seeking anything but goodness. And he says what his own goodness makes him think, without considering whether he says too much and whether he may be reproached for it.

Go in peace. And may the Truth become your friend. »

Little Asriel, who has been sitting all the time at Jesus' feet, looking up at Him like a little bird that listens to the song of its father, makes a loving gesture: he rubs his little face against Jesus' knees and says to Him: « You and I are friends because You are good and I love You. Now I will say that too » and forcing his voice to make himself heard from one end to the other of the large room, gesticulating as he saw Jesus doing, he says: « Listen, everybody. I know where the people go who do not tell lies and love Jesus of Nazareth. They climb up Jacob's ladder. Up, up, up... together with the angels and they stop when they find the Lord » and he smiles happily, displaying his little teeth.

Jesus caresses him and goes among the crowd. He takes the little one back to his mother and says: « Thank you, woman, for giving Me your child. »

« He has bothered You... »

« No. He has given Me love. He is a little one of the Lord and may the Lord be always with him and with you. » It all ends.

### **GOOD CHILDREN ARE LIKE ANGELS**

**(Vol. 2, p. 49)**

*(Jesus is in the Roman town of Caesarea, on the Mediterranean coast. Some children look at Him curiously, and He caresses them while speaking to His apostles...)*

A little boy, about eight years old, who is playing in a corner with two other little lads, comes near Jesus. He is a strong boy, with very dark hair and a fair complexion.

« Who are you? »

« I am Lucius, Caius Lucius, of Caius Marius, a Roman, the son of the Decurion of the guards, who remained here after he was wounded. »

« And who are those? »

« They are Isaac and Toby. But we must not say, because they are not allowed to play with us. The Jews would hit them. »

« Why? »

« Because they are Jews and I am a Roman. They are forbidden to associate with us. »

« But you are playing with them. Why? »

« Because we are fond of one another. We always play together dice or jumping. But we have to hide. »

« And would you love Me? I am a Jew, too, and I am not a boy. Just imagine: I am a Master, something like a priest. »

« What do I care? If You love me, I will love You. And I love You because You love me. »

« How do you know? »

« Because You are good. Who is good, loves. »

« There you are, My friends. That is the secret to love: to be good. Then you love without considering to which faith other people belong. »

And Jesus, holding little Caius Lucius by the hand, goes and caresses the little Jewish children, who are frightened and hide in a passage way and He says to them: « Good children are angels. Angels have one fatherland only: Paradise. They have only one religion: the religion of the One God. They have only one Temple: the Heart of God. Like little angels, always love one another. »

### **THE LITTLE MOTHER**

**(Vol. 2, p. 287)**

*(Jesus and His apostles have adopted a little boy, Jabez, whose mother and father were killed in a landslide, and who has been looked after by his old grandfather, a poor peasant who is very ill...)*

They are all sitting in a circle in the shade of some olive-trees, with Jabez in the centre staring at Jesus as if he were listening to a heavenly tale.

« I will tell you about the lesson on chastity that My Mother gave Her little friend, and many more people, a few days before entering the Temple. A girl in Nazareth, a relative of Sarah's, got married, on that day and also Joachim and Anne had been invited to the wedding. Little Mary went with them, and with other children She was to spread loose flower petals on the bride's way. They say that She was most beautiful, as a child, and everybody contended for Her after the joyful arrival of the bride. It was not easy to see Mary every day, as She lived mostly at home, where She loved a little grotto more than any other place, and even nowadays She calls it "the grotto of Her nuptials". So, when She appeared outside, fair-haired, rosy and kind, She was overwhelmed by caresses. They used to call Her "the Flower of Nazareth" or "the Pearl of Galilee" or also "the Peace of God" in remembrance of a huge rainbow, which suddenly appeared as soon as She was born. She was in fact all that, and much more. She is the Flower of Heaven and of creation, the Pearl of Paradise and the Peace of God... Yes, the Peace of God. I am the Peaceful One because I am the Son of the Father and the Son of Mary: the Infinite Peace and the Sweet Peace. On that day everybody wanted to kiss Her and take Her on their laps. And as She was averse to being kissed and touched, She said with kind gravity: "Please, do not rumple Me". They thought She was talking of Her linen dress, held tight to Her waist, to Her wrists and neck by a blue band - or of Her little wreath of blue flowers, with which Anne had adorned Her head to keep Her light curls in place, and they assured Her that they would not crease Her dress or the wreath. But, sure of Herself, a little three-year-old woman standing in the middle of a circle of adults, She said seriously: "I am not thinking of what can be mended. I am speaking of My soul. It belongs to God. And it does not wish to be touched but by God". They objected: "But we are kissing You, not Your soul". She replied: "My body is the temple of My soul, and the Spirit is its priest. People are not allowed to enter the enclosure of priests. Please, do not enter the enclosure of God". Alphaeus, who was then about eight years old and was very fond of Her, was greatly impressed by that reply and the following day, seeing Her near Her little grotto, he asked Her: "Mary, when You are grown up, would You marry me?". He was still under the excitement of the nuptial feast at which he had been present. And She answered: "I am very fond of you. But I do not see you as a man. I will tell you a secret. I see only the soul of a living being. And I love it so much, with all My heart. But I see only God as the 'True Living Being' to Whom I will be able to give Myself". That is one of the episodes. »

« "The True Living Being"!!! That is a very deep word! » exclaims Bartholomew. And Jesus, humbly and smiling replies: « She was the Mother of Wisdom. »

« Was She? ... But was She not three years old? »

« She was. I already lived in Her, as God was in Her, in His most perfect Unity and Trinity, since She was conceived. »

## **A CHILD TEACHES MARY MAGDALENE TO PRAY (Vol. 2, p. 535-7)**

*(Persuaded by His Mother, Jesus has allowed the apostle Peter, and His wife Porphirea, to adopt the orphan boy Jabez, who is now called Marjiam. It is early morning, as Jesus, His Mother, Martha, the recently converted Mary Magdalene, and some of the apostles embark from Peter's boat on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. They go to Peter's and Porphirea's house, where the Magdalene meets Porphirea and Marjiam for the first time...)*

Marjiam looks at the Magdalene curiously. Many thoughts must be crossing his mind. At last, he says: « But... you were not at Bethany... »

« No, I was not. But I shall always be there from now on » says the Magdalene, blushing and smiling faintly. She caresses the boy, saying: « Even if we have just met, do you love me? »

« Yes, because you are good. You have wept, have you not? That is why you are good. And your name is Mary, isn't it? Also, my mother's name was Mary and she was good. Every woman, whose name is Mary, is good. But » he concludes, not to offend Porphirea and Martha, « but also many of those with other names are good. What was your mother's name? »

« Eucheria... and she was so good » and two large tears stream down the face of Mary of Magdala.

« Are you weeping because she is dead? » asks the boy, and he caresses her beautiful hands, which she has crossed on her dark dress, which is obviously one of Martha's adapted for her, because its hem has been let down. And he adds: « You must not weep. You know, we are not alone. Our mothers are always near us. Jesus says so. And they are like guardian angels. Jesus says that also. And if we are good, they will come and meet us, when we die and we go up to God in our mother's arms. It is true, you know? He said so! »

Mary of Magdala clasps her little consoler in her arms and kisses him, saying: « Then pray that I may become good. »

« But are you not already? Only those who are good go with Jesus... And if one is not completely good, one becomes good, in order to become a disciple of Jesus. Because you cannot teach what you do not know. We cannot say: "Forgive" if we do not forgive first. Neither can we say: "You must love your neighbour" if we do not love him first. Do you know Jesus' prayer? »

« No, I don't. »

« Of course, you have been with Him only a short time. It is so beautiful, you know? It mentions all these things. Listen how beautiful it is. » And Marjiam slowly says the « Our Father » with deep sentiment and faith.

« How well you know it! » says Mary of Magdala admiringly.

« My mother taught it to me by night, and Jesus' Mother by day. If you wish so, I will teach it to you. Do you wish to come with me? The sheep are bleating. They are hungry. I am going to take them to the pasture. Come with me. I will teach you how to pray, and you will become thoroughly good » and he takes her by the hand.

« But I do not know whether the Master wants... »

« Go, by all means, Mary. You have an innocent child as a friend, and some little lambs... You may go, tranquilly... »

Mary of Magdala goes out with the boy, and she can be seen going away, preceded by the three sheep. Jesus is looking on... and the others, too.

« My poor sister! » exclaims Martha.

« Do not pity her. She is a flower straightening its stem after a storm. Can you hear her? ... She is laughing... Innocence is always a consolation. »

## **A RIDE ON A CAMEL**

**(Vol. 3, p. 80-5)**

*(Jesus, with His Mother, the apostles, the women disciples and Marjiam, are travelling through the countryside with a merchant - Alexander Misace - and his team of mules, camels and camel-drivers. It is the Sabbath, and they are spending the day in a house and yards outside the walls of the town of Gerasa, where they have not been made very welcome. Maria Valtorta describes the scene...)*

Many have stayed in bed, or are dozing in the sun, that makes the large square yard of the house comfortably warm. It is a yard suited to receive caravans, as it is fitted with basins and rings, fixed to the walls or columns of a rustic porch, which runs along the four sides, with many stables and lofts for hay and straw, on three sides. The women are in their rooms. I do not see even one of them.

Marjiam amuses himself also in the closed yard, watching the work of the stable-men, who curry mules, change litters, examine hoofs, fasten loose horse-shoes, or, what is of greater interest to him because it is something entirely new, he is spellbound watching how the cameleers deal with the camels, preparing in advance the load for each animal, in proportion to each of them, balancing it, and how they make a camel kneel down and rise in order to load and unload it, rewarding each one with a handful of dry legumes, which I think are broad beans - and at the end, they gave them carobs, which the men also chew with relish.

Marjiam is utterly amazed, and he looks round to find someone with whom he may share his amazement. But he is disappointed, because adults are not interested in camels. They are either speaking to one another or dozing. He goes to Peter who is sleeping blissfully, with his head resting on soft hay, and shakes his arm. Peter half opens his eyes and asks: « What is it? Who wants me? »

« I do. Come and see the camels. »

« Let me sleep. I have seen so many of them... Ugly animals. »

The boy then goes to Matthew, who is checking his accounts, as he is the treasurer during this trip: « You know, I have been to see the camels. They eat like sheep, did you know? And they kneel down like men, and they look like boats moving up and down. Have you seen them? »

Matthew, who has lost his count owing to the interruption, replies sharply: « Yes » and resumes counting his money.

Another disappointment... Marjiam looks round... There is Simon Zealot speaking to Judas Thaddeus... « How lovely camels are! And how good! They loaded and unloaded them, and they lay down on the ground so that the cameleer should not have to work too hard. And they eat carobs. The men also were eating them. I would like... But I cannot make myself understood. Come with me... » and he takes Simon by the hand.

Simon, who is engrossed in peaceful conversation with Thaddeus, replies absentmindedly: « Yes, dear... Go... and watch that you do not hurt yourself. »

Marjiam is astonished... Simon has not replied to the point. The boy is almost weeping. He goes away downheartedly and leans against a column...

Jesus comes out of a room and sees that he is sulky and alone. He goes towards the boy and lays a hand on his head. « What are you doing all alone and so sad? »

« No one will listen to me... »

« What did you want from them? »

« Nothing... I was speaking of the camels... They are lovely... I like them. It must be like being on a boat to be up there... And they eat carobs; the men also eat them... »

« And you want to go up there and eat carobs. Come, let us go to the camels » and Jesus takes him by the hand and goes to the end of the yard with the child, who has become cheerful once again.

He goes straight to a cameleer and greets him with a smile. The man bows to Him and continues examining his animal, adjusting its halter and reins.

« Man, do you understand Me? »

« Yes, Lord. I have known Your people for twenty years. »

« This boy has a big desire: to climb up on a camel... And a little one: to eat a carob » and Jesus smiles once again more lively.

« Your son? »

« No, I have no children. I am not married. »

... The man looks at Him and is spellbound. He then says: « I have nine children at Ischilo... I go: one son. I go: another son. Always. »

« Do you love your children? »

« They are of my blood! But my work is hard. I am here; my children are there. We are far apart... But I do it for their bread. Do you understand? »

« I do. So, you can understand the boy who would like to mount a camel and eat carobs. »

« Yes. Come. Are you afraid? No? Good. Lovely boy! I have one, too, like you. Dark like you. Here. Take and hold it tight » and he puts into Marjiam's hand the strange handle which is in the front part of the saddle. « Hold it. I will come on now. And the camel will stand up. You are not afraid, eh? » And the man climbs up on the high saddle, he makes himself comfortable and spurs the camel, which stands up obediently with a heavy pitch.

Marjiam laughs happily. And he is all the more happy because the cameleer has put a delicious carob into his mouth. The camel ambles along the yard, then the driver puts it into a trot, finally, seeing that Marjiam is not afraid, he shouts something to one of his companions, who opens the very wide gate at the rear of the yard, and the cameleer disappears with his load in the green country.

Jesus goes back towards the house and enters a large room where the women are. He smiles so happily that Mary asks Him: « What has happened, Son, that You are so happy? »

« I am as happy as Marjiam, who is galloping on a camel. Come out so that we may see him coming back. »

They all go out into the yard and sit on the low wall near the basins. The apostles who are not sleeping, approach them. Those who are at the windows in the rooms upstairs, look down, they see the group and go down to join them. Their shrill youthful voices, they are in fact the voices of John and of the two Jameses, awake also Peter and Andrew, and arouse Matthew. They are now all together, because John of Endor and the two disciples have also joined the group.

« But where is Marjiam? I don't see him » asks Peter.

« He has gone for a run on a camel. None of you would listen to him... I saw that he was so sad and I took care of him. »

Peter, Simon and Matthew remember: « Of course! He was talking about camels... and carobs. But I was sleepy! »; « I had to check my accounts as I wanted to inform You of what I had received from the Gerasenes and what I had given to the poor »; « And I was speaking of faith with Your brother. »

« It does not matter. I saw to it. But incidentally, I tell you that to take care of children's games is also love... There is Alexander inspecting his camels. I will now tell him that one is missing through My fault. » And Jesus hastens towards the merchant and speaks to him.

*(Sometime later...)*

... the cry of the cameleer makes the group understand that the camel is about to come back, at a slow pace, without making any noise on the thick grass outside the rear gate, which a servant opens at once. And Marjiam comes back, he is happy, and his face is flushed after the run. He is a tiny little man hoisted onto the high back of the camel, and he laughs waving his arms, while the camel kneels down and he slides down from the odd saddle, caressing the swarthy cameleer. He then runs towards Jesus shouting: « How lovely! Did the Wise men come from the East on those animals to worship You? I will go on them, to preach You all over the world! The world seems larger when seen from up there, and it says: "Come, you who know the Gospel!". Oh! Do You know?... That man also is in need of it... And you, too, merchant, and all your servants... How many people are waiting and die without receiving it... More people

than the sand in the river... They are all without you, Jesus! Oh! Make haste and announce it to everybody! » and he clings to Jesus' sides looking up at Him.

And Jesus bends kissing him and promising: « You will see the Kingdom of God evangelized as far as the most remote borders of Rome. Are you happy? »

« I am. And then I will come and say to You: "This, that, and that other Country... they all know You". I will then know the names of those remote Countries. And what will You say to me? »

« I will say: "Come, little Marjiam. Have a crown for every country in which you have preached Me, and then come here beside Me, as on that day at Gerasa, and rest after all your work, because you have been a faithful servant and it is right that you should be happy in My Kingdom". »

## **JESUS, MARJIAM, AND PRAYER**

**(Vol. 3, p. 93-6)**

*(Jesus and His group have left Gerasa, still with the merchant Alexander Misace, and are travelling near the Hauran mountains, towards Bozrah...)*

Jesus is all alone, in the rear, as He is wont to do at times when He so wishes. Marjiam turns round several times looking at Him. When he can resist no longer, he leaves Peter and James of Zebedee, he sits on the edge of the road, on a stone which must be a Roman military landmark, and waits. When Jesus is at his level, the boy stands up, and without speaking, he goes beside Jesus, remaining a little behind Him, so as not to annoy Him, and he watches Him...

And he continues watching, until Jesus comes out of His meditation, and turns round on hearing the light footstep behind Him, and He smiles, stretching His hand out to the boy, and saying: « Oh! Marjiam! What are you doing here all alone? »

« I was looking at You. I have been looking at You for days. Everybody has eyes but not everybody sees the same things. I have noticed that now and again You want to remain all alone... On the first days I thought You were hurt by something. Then I noticed that You do it always at the same time, and that Your Mother, who always comforts You When You are sad, does not say anything to You when Your countenance is like that. On the contrary, if She happens to be speaking, She becomes quiet, and concentrates on meditation. I notice things, You know? Because I always look at You and Her, in order to do what You do. I asked the apostles what You do, because You certainly do something. They said to me: "He prays". And I asked them: "What does He say?". No one replied, because they do not know. They have been with You for years, and they do not know. Today I followed You every time I noticed that countenance, and I watched You while You were praying. But Your countenance is not always the same. This morning, at dawn, You looked like a bright angel. You looked at things with such bright eyes, that I think they dispelled darkness more than the sun did. And You looked at things and people like that. And then You looked at the sky and Your face was the same as when You offer the bread at table. Later, when we were crossing that little village, You remained alone, in the rear, and You seemed to me a father, as You were so anxious to say kind words to the poor people of the village, while passing by. You said to one: "Endure your suffering with patience, because I will soon relieve you, and others like you". He was the slave of that bad man who set his dogs on us. Then, while the food was being prepared, You looked at us with eyes full of kind love. You looked like a mother... But Your countenance was now sorrowful... What do You think, Jesus, when You are always like that?... But also in the evening, at times, if I am not asleep, I see that You are very serious. Will You tell me how You pray, why You pray? »

« Of course, I will tell you. So that you can pray with Me. The day is given to us by God. The whole day: the bright one and the dark one: day and night. It is a gift to live, and have light. Our way of living is a means of sanctification. Is that right? So, we must sanctify the moments of the whole day, to persevere in holiness, and have the Most-High, and His bounty, present in our hearts, and at the same time, keep the Demon away. Watch the little birds. They sing at sunrise. They bless the light. We must bless the light as well, because it is a gift of God, and we must bless God Who grants it to us, and Who is the Light. We must crave for God as from daybreak, to put a seal, a note of light, on the whole oncoming day, that it may be entirely bright and holy. And we must join the whole creation in praising the Creator. Then, as the hours go by, and going by they make us aware of how much sorrow and ignorance there is in the world, we must pray again, that sorrow may be relieved, and ignorance may vanish, and God may be known, loved and prayed to by all men, who, if they knew God, would be comforted in their sufferings. And at the sixth hour (*Jesus means the middle of the day*), we must pray out of love for our family, to enjoy the gift of being united to those who love us. That is also a gift of God. And we must pray that our eating, instead of being useful, may not become an occasion of sin. And at sunset we pray, remembering that death is the inevitable end waiting for all of us. And we must pray that our end, be it today or later, may take place with our souls in grace. And when the lights are lit, we must pray to thank for the day which is over, and to ask for protection and forgiveness, so that we may go to sleep without any fear of a sudden judgement, or assaults of the demon. And, finally, we must pray at night - but this applies only to adults - to make amends for the sins of the night, to keep Satan away from weak people, and that culprits may ponder, repent, and make good resolutions, which will become facts at sunrise. That is how, and why, a just person prays, during the whole day. »

« But You have not told me why You are so absorbed, so grave and imposing, at the ninth hour... (*Marjiam means the middle of the afternoon*) »

« Because... I say: "Through the Sacrifice of this hour, let Your Kingdom come to the world, and may all those who believe in Your Word be redeemed". Say the same yourself... »

« What sacrifice is it? You said that incense is offered in the morning and evening, and the victims at the same hour, every day, on the altar of the Temple. And that the victims for vows and expiation are offered at any hour. There is no indication of a special rite for the ninth hour. »

Jesus stops and takes the boy with both hands, and lifts him, holding him in front of Himself, and as if He were saying a psalm, with His face raised, He says: « "And between the sixth and ninth hour, He Who has come as Saviour and Redeemer, He of Whom the prophets speak, will consume His Sacrifice, after eating the bitter bread of betrayal, and after giving the sweet Bread of Life, after crushing Himself like grapes in a vat, and quenching with His whole being, the thirst of men and plants, and making for Himself a Royal purple with His own blood, and putting on a crown, and seizing the sceptre, and taking His throne on the high place, so that Zion and Israel and the world might see it. Lifted up in the purple garment of His numberless wounds, in the dark to give Light, in death to give Life, He will die at the ninth hour, and the world will be redeemed". »

Marjiam is frightened and pale, and looks at Him with dismayed eyes and trembling lips, on the point of bursting into tears. With faltering voice, he says: « But You are the Saviour! So will You be dying at that hour? » Tears begin to stream down his cheeks, and his little mouth sips them, while he awaits a denial.

But Jesus says: « I will, My little disciple. For you, too. » And as the child bursts into convulsive sobs, He presses him to His heart, and says: « Are you sorry that I die? »

« Oh! My only joy! I do not want that! I... Let me die in Your place... »

« You are to preach Me all over the world. That is settled. But listen. I will die happily because I know that you love Me. Then I will rise from the dead. Do you remember Jonah? He was more handsome when he came out of the belly of the whale, well rested and strong. So will I, and I will come to you at once and I will say to you: "Little Marjiam, your tears quenched My thirst. Your love kept Me company in the Sepulchre. I have now come to say to you: 'Be My priest' " and I will kiss you with the scent of Paradise still on Me. »

« But where will I be? Will I not be with Peter or Mother? »

« I will save you from the evil waves of those days. I will save the most weak and innocent ones. Except one... Marjiam, little apostle, will you help me to pray for that hour? »

« Oh! Yes, I will, Lord! And the others? »

« That is a secret between you and Me. A great secret. Because God loves to be revealed to the little ones... Do not weep any more. Smile - at the thought that afterwards, I will suffer no more, and I will only remember all the love of men, and yours first. Come. Look how far the others are. Let us run and join them » and He puts him down and holding him by the hand they start running until they reach the group.

« Master, what have You done? »

« I was explaining the hours of the day to Marjiam. »

« And has the boy wept? He must have been naughty, and You are excusing him out of kindness » says Peter.

« No, Simon. He watched Me praying. You have not done that. He asked Me why. I told him. The boy was moved by My words. Now leave him alone. Go to My Mother, Marjiam. And you all, listen to Me. The lesson will do no harm to you either. »

And Jesus explains once again the usefulness of prayer at the main hours of the day, leaving out the explanation of the ninth hour, and concluding: « Union to God is to have Him present every moment, to praise and invoke Him. Do so, and you will make progress in the life of the spirit. »

### **“A SPOONFUL OF HONEY”**

**(Vol. 3, p. 183-5, 193)**

*(Jesus, His Mother and some of the apostles are in Mary's house in Nazareth. Also, there are the Greek slave girl Syntyche, and the old sick teacher John of Endor. Marjiam asks Mary:)*

« Mother, why have You not put the honey cakes on the table? Jesus likes them, and they are good for John's throat. And my father likes them, too... »

« And you, too » concludes Peter.

« As far as I am concerned... they do not exist. I promised... »

« That is why I did not put them on the table, My dear... » says Mary caressing him, because Marjiam is between Her and Syntyche, on one side of the table, while the four men are on the opposite side.

Marjiam answers: « No, no. You can bring them. Nay: You must bring them. And I will hand them out to everybody. »

Syntyche takes a lamp, goes out and comes back with the cakes. Marjiam takes the tray and begins to hand them out. He gives Jesus the most beautiful one, golden and raised like one made by a master confectioner. The next one in perfection is for Mary. Then it is the turn of Peter, Simon and Syntyche. But in order to serve John, the boy gets up and goes beside the old sick teacher and says to him: « I am giving you yours and mine, with a kiss, to thank you for what you teach me. » He then goes back to his place, lays the tray in the middle of the table resolutely, and folds his arms.

« You make this delicious cake go the wrong way » says Peter, when he sees that Marjiam does not take any. And he adds: « At least a little bit. Here, take some of mine, so that you will not die to have some. You are suffering too much... Jesus will let you have it. »

« But if I did not suffer, I would have no merit, father. I offered this sacrifice exactly because I knew that it would make me suffer. After all, ... I have been so happy since I made it, that I seem to be full of honey. I taste it in everything, and I even seem to breathe it in the air... »

« That's because you are dying to have some... »

« No. It's because I know that God says to me: "You are doing the right thing, My son". »

« The Master would have satisfied you, even without this sacrifice. He loves you so much! »

« Yes. But it is not fair that I should take advantage of it, just because He loves me. In any case, He says that great is the reward in Heaven, even for a cup of water offered in His name. I think that if it is great for a cup of water given to other people in His name, it must be great also for a cake, or a little honey, which one gives up out of love for a brother. Am I wrong, Master? »

« No, you have spoken wisely. In fact, I could have granted you (something) you asked for... also without your sacrifice, because it was a good thing to do and My Heart desired it. But I did it with greater joy because I was helped by you. The love for our brothers is not confined to human means and limits, but it rises to much higher levels. When it is perfect, it really touches the throne of God, and blends with His infinite Charity and Bounty. The communion of saints is just this continuous activity, as God works continuously, and in every way, to assist our brothers, both in their material and spiritual needs, or in both... Even a spoonful of honey, offered as a sacrifice, can help to bring peace and hope to an afflicted soul, as a cake or any other food given up out of love, may obtain some bread, offered miraculously, for some starving person, who is remote from us, and will never be known to us; and an angry word, not uttered out of spirit of sacrifice, although justified, may prevent a remote crime, as to resist the desire to pick a fruit, out of love, may bring about a thought of repiscence in a thief and thwart a theft. Nothing is lost in the holy economy of universal love: neither the heroic sacrifice of a boy before a dish of honey cakes, nor the holocaust of a martyr. Nay, I tell you, that the holocaust of a martyr, often originates from the heroic upbringing imparted to him since his childhood, for the love of God and his neighbour. »

« So, it is really a good thing that I should always make sacrifices. For the time when we will be persecuted » says Marjiam earnestly.

« Persecuted? » asks Peter.

« Yes. Don't you remember that He said so? "You will be persecuted in My name". You told me, the first time you came all alone to Bethsaida, in summer, to evangelize. »

« This boy remembers everything » comments Peter admiring him.

The supper is over. Jesus stands up. He prays for everybody and blesses them. And while the women go to tidy up the kitchen, Jesus and the men take seats in a corner of the room, where He begins to carve a piece of wood, which, under the amazed eyes of Marjiam, takes the shape of a little sheep...

*(Sometime later, Jesus tells Syntyche and John of Endor that they will have to go to Antioch, to avoid being persecuted because of their past. They are both distraught at having to go away. While Jesus is talking with Mary, John and Syntyche, Marjiam comes in with a jar of honey. He says:)*

« Here, John, take it. You will eat it in my place... »

« No, my child! Why? »

« Because Jesus has said that a spoonful of honey, offered as a sacrifice, can give peace and hope to an afflicted soul. You are afflicted... I am giving you all the honey, that you may be completely comforted. »

« But it is too big a sacrifice for you, boy. »

« Oh! no! In Jesus' prayer we say: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". This jar was a temptation to me... and might have been an evil because it might have made me infringe my vow. Now I will not see it any more... and it is easier... and I am sure that God will help you, because of this new sacrifice. But do not weep any more. And you, too, Syntyche... »

In fact, the Greek woman is now weeping, noiselessly, while taking John's rolls. And Marjiam caresses them in turn, with a keen desire to weep himself. Syntyche goes out laden with rolls, and Mary follows her with the jar of honey.

John is left with Jesus, who is sat beside him, and with the boy in his arms. He is calm, but depressed.

« Put your last writing in the roll » suggests Jesus. « I think that you want to give it to Marjiam... »

« Yes... I have a copy for myself... Here, boy. These are the words of the Master. The words He spoke when you were not here, and others as well... I wanted to continue copying them for you, because you have a whole life in front of you... and goodness knows how much you will evangelize... But I cannot do it any more... Now it is I who will be left without His words... » And he begins to weep bitterly once again.

Marjiam is kind and virile in his new gesture. He throws his arms round John's neck and says: « I will write them for you now, and I will send them to you... Is that right, Master? It can be done, can it not? »

« Of course it can. And it will be great charity to do so. »

### **TO BE LIKE CHILDREN (Vol. 3, p. 424-5, 429-31)**

*(The apostles are discussing their respective merits as Jesus' disciples - a discussion which begins to develop into a quarrel. Jesus appears to be ignoring them, as they enter the village of Capernaum...)*

A little boy of seven or eight years runs, tripping, after Jesus. He overtakes the vociferous group of the apostles, and reaches Him. He is a lovely boy, with short curly dark-brown hair. His dark eyes shine intelligently in his little dark face. He calls the Master confidentially, as if he were very familiar with Him. He says: « Jesus, will You let me come with You as far as Your house? »

« Does your mother know? » asks Jesus smiling at him kindly.

« Yes, she does. »

« Is it true? » although smiling, Jesus casts a piercing glance at him.

« Yes, Jesus, it is true. »

« Come then. »

The boy jumps for joy, and takes the left hand of Jesus, who stretches it out to him. With how much loving reliance the child places his little swarthy hand into Jesus' long hand!...

« Tell me a nice parable, Jesus » says the boy skipping beside Jesus, and looking up at Him, his face shining with joy.

Jesus also looks at him with a cheerful smile, which opens His lips shaded by His moustache, and His reddish golden beard, which shines like gold in the sun. His dark sapphire eyes sparkle with joy, while He looks at the child.

« What will you do with a parable? It is not a game. »

« It is better than a game. When I go to bed, I think about it, then I dream of it, and the following day I remember it, and I repeat to myself to be good. It makes me good. »

« Do you remember it? »

« Yes, I do. Shall I repeat to you all the ones You told me? »

« You are clever, Benjamin, more clever than men, who forget. As a prize I will tell you a parable. »

The boy no longer hops about. He walks seriously, and as gravely as an adult, he does not miss one word or any inflexion of Jesus, whom he watches carefully, without even worrying where he puts his feet...

*(Jesus tells the boy a parable about a kind shepherd, who loved his many sheep. But many of the sheep who were disobedient and lazy, fell into precipices, or butted and killed each other...)*

Only one little lamb never went astray. It ran about bleating as if to say to the shepherd: "I love you"; it always ran behind the good shepherd, and when they arrived at the gates of his kingdom, they were the only two: the shepherd and the little faithful lamb. Then the shepherd did not say: "go in", but he said: "come" and he took it in his arms, close to his chest, and he took it inside, calling all his subjects and saying to them: "Here. This little lamb loves me. I want it to be with me for ever. And you must love it because it is the pet of my heart". And that is the end of the parable, Benjamin. Now can you tell Me: who is that good shepherd? »

« It's You, Jesus. »

« And who is the little lamb? »

« It's me, Jesus. »

« But I will be going away now. You will forget Me. »

« No, Jesus. I will not forget You, because I love You. »

« Your love will come to an end when you no longer see Me. »

« I will repeat to myself the words that You spoke to me, and it will be the same as if You were present. I will love You and obey You. And tell me, Jesus: Will You remember Benjamin? »

« Always. »

« And how will You remember? »

« I will say to Myself that you promised to love and obey Me, and so I will remember you. »

« And will You give me Your Kingdom? »

« I will, if you are good. »

« I will be good. »

« What will you do? Life is long. »

« But Your words are very good, too. If I repeat them to myself, and I do what they say I should do, I will be good all my life. And I will do that because I love You. When one loves, it is not difficult to be good. I do not find it difficult to obey my mother, because I love her. And it will not be difficult for me to obey You, because I love You. »

Jesus stops and looks at the little face, which is lit by love more than by the sun. Jesus' joy is so deep, that another sun seems to be burning in His soul, and shining through His eyes. He bends and kisses the forehead of the child.

He has stopped near a humble house with a well in front. Jesus sits down near the well where He is joined by the disciples, who are still arguing over their prerogatives.

Jesus looks at them. Then He calls them: « Come here, round Me, and listen to the last lesson of the day, you who have shouted yourselves hoarse celebrating your own merits - and believe that you will gain a position according to them. See this child? He is in the truth more than you are. His innocence gives him the key to open the gates of My Kingdom. In his simplicity of a child, he has understood that the

strength necessary to become great, lies in love - and that obedience, practised with love, is required to enter My Kingdom. Be simple and humble, be affectionate - not to Me only, but to one another, obey My words, all of them, also the ones I am speaking to you now, if you wish to reach the place that these innocent souls will enter. Learn from the little ones. The Father reveals the truth to them, but He does not reveal it to the wise. »

Jesus is speaking holding Benjamin against His knees, with His hands on the boy's shoulders. Jesus' countenance is majestic. He is serious, not angry, but grave. As it becomes a Master. His fair-haired head is a blaze of light in the last sunbeams.

*(A little while later, Jesus is alone with His apostles, and He says to them:)*

« You are asking: "Which of us will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?".

I do not take into consideration the limitation "of us" and I extend the frontiers to the whole present and future world, and I reply: "He is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, who is the least among men". That is: he who is considered "the least" by men: the simple, the humble, the trustful, the unaware. That is a child, or he who can make his soul be like the soul of a child once again. Neither science, nor power, nor wealth, nor industry, not even good industry, will make you "the greatest" in the blessed Kingdom. It is necessary to be like children, with regard to loving kindness, humility, simplicity, faith.

Watch how children love Me, and imitate them. How they believe in Me, and imitate them. How they remember what I say, and imitate them. How they do what I teach them, and imitate them. How they do not pride themselves on what they do, and imitate them. How they do not become jealous of Me and of their companions, and imitate them. I solemnly tell you, that if you do not change your ways of thinking, of acting, and of loving, and you do not remould them on the pattern of children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. They know the essential elements of My doctrine, as you know them, but how differently they practise what I teach! For every good action you accomplish, you say: "I did that". A child says to Me: "I remembered You today, I obeyed for Your sake, I loved, I refrained from quarrelling... and I am happy, because I know that You are aware when I am good, and You are pleased". And watch children when they are at fault. How humbly they confess: "Today I was naughty. And I am sorry because I grieved You". And they do not find excuses. They know that I know. They believe. They are sorry because I am sorry.

Oh! How dear, children are to My heart: there is no pride, no duplicity, no lust in them! I tell you once again: become like children if you wish to enter My Kingdom. Love children, as they are angelical examples still at your disposal. Because you ought to be like angels. As an excuse you may say: "We do not see angels". But God gives you children as examples, and you have children amongst you. And if you see a child who is physically or morally forlorn, and who may perish, welcome him in My Name, because they are greatly loved by God. And he who welcomes a child in My Name, welcomes Me, because I am in the innocent souls of children. And he who welcomes Me, welcomes Him Who sent Me, the Most-High.

And beware lest you should scandalise one of these little ones, whose eyes see God. You must never scandalise anybody. But woe betide three times those who soil the innocent purity of children! Let them be like angels as long as possible. The world and flesh are too repugnant to souls coming from Heaven! And a child, through his innocence, is still entirely a soul. Respect the soul of a child and his body as you respect a sacred place. And a child is sacred also because he has God within himself. The temple of the Spirit is in every body. But the temple of a child is the most sacred and intimate...

A child sanctifies, brings solace and freshness through the simple glance of his innocent eyes. But woe to those who despoil children of their holiness through their scandalous behaviour!... Remember that. Do not scandalise the little ones, do not

despise them, do not deride them. They are worth more than you are, because their angels always see God, who tells them the truth to be revealed to children and to those whose hearts are like those of children.

And love one another like children, without disputes and without pride. And be at peace with one another. Be peaceful-minded towards everybody. You are brothers, in the name of the Lord, not enemies. There must be no enmity among Jesus' disciples. The only Enemy is Satan. Be his fierce enemies, and join battle with him, and with the sins that install Satan in the hearts of men.

Be tireless in fighting Evil, whichever form it may take. And be patient. There is no limit to the activity of an apostle, because there is no limit to the activity of Evil. The demon never says: "That is enough. I am tired now and I am going to rest". He is tireless... He does not rest in order to bring people to hell. You must not rest in order to bring people to Paradise. Give him no quarter. I foretell you, that the more you fight him, the more he will make you suffer. But you must not worry about that. He can overrun the earth, but he cannot enter Heaven. So, he will not be able to trouble you there, and all those who have fought him will be in Heaven... »

## **JESUS AND LITTLE DAVID**

**(Vol. 3, p. 448-9)**

*(Jesus has experienced rejection, in the synagogue at Capernaum, and has been deserted by some of His disciples. He asks for, and receives, consolation from some of His apostles, and later, He is all alone on the terrace of Thomas' house...)*

He is sitting on a low bench in a corner near the parapet, with His back to the staircase, almost hidden by the parapet; He is resting one elbow on His knee and reclines His head on His hand with a tired almost painful gesture.

He is interrupted in His meditation by the arrival of a little boy, who wants to say goodbye to Him, before leaving for Jerusalem. « Jesus! Jesus! » he calls at each step, as he cannot see Jesus because the low wall conceals Him from the sight of whoever is below. And Jesus is so engrossed in thought, that He does not hear the light voice or the step of the child, which is as light as a dove's... so that when the boy arrives on the terrace, He is still in the same painful position. And the little boy is frightened. He stops on the threshold, puts a finger between his lips and thinks... he then makes up his mind and moves slowly forward... he is now almost behind Jesus' back... he bends to see what He is doing... and says: « No, lovely Jesus! Don't weep! Why? Because of those bad ugly men of yesterday? My father was saying to Jairus that they are not worthy of You. But You must not weep. I love You. And my little sister, and James and Toby, and Johanna, and Mary and Micah and all the children in Capernaum, they all love You. Don't weep any more... » and he clasps Jesus' neck, caressing Him, and concludes: « Otherwise I will weep, too and I will weep during all the journey... »

« No, David, I am not weeping any more. You have consoled Me. Are you alone? When are you leaving? »

« After sunset. We are going by boat as far as Tiberias. Come with us. My father loves You, you know? »

« Yes, I know, My dear. But I must go to other children... Thank you for coming to say goodbye to Me. I bless you, little David. Let us kiss each other goodbye, and then you will go back to your mother. Does she know that you are here? »

« No, she doesn't. I ran away because I did not see You with Your disciples, and I thought that You might be weeping. »

« I am not weeping any more, as you can see. Go back to your mother, who perhaps is looking for you and is worried. Goodbye. Watch the donkeys of the caravans. See? They stop everywhere. »

« Are You really not weeping anymore? »

« No. I am no longer grieved. You have comforted Me. Thank you, My child. »  
The boy runs down the steps while Jesus watches him. He then shakes His head and goes back to His place in the same sorrowful meditation as before.

### **JESUS AND THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS**

**(Vol. 3, p. 450-1)**

*(A little while later, Jesus is approached by the daughter of Jairus - the girl whom Jesus had raised from the dead [see Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels] ...)*

... Jairus' daughter, in a white dress, goes upstairs as lightly as a dove. She looks round... She then calls in a low voice: « My Saviour! »

Jesus looks round, sees her, smiles and says: « Come near Me. »

« Yes, my Lord. But I would like to take You to the others. Why is the synagogue to be silent today? »

« There is your father and many others to fill it with words. »

« But they are words... Yours is the Word. Oh! My Lord! Through Your word You gave me back to my mother and father, and I was dead. But look at those who are now going towards the synagogue! Many of them are more dead than I was. Come, and give them Life. »

« My dear daughter, you deserved it; they... No word can give life to those who choose death for themselves. »

« Yes, my Lord. But come just the same. There are also some who live more intensely when they hear You... Come. Give me Your hand and let us go. I am the witness of Your power, and I am ready to bear witness also before Your enemies, even at the cost of being deprived of this second life, which in any case is no longer mine. You gave it to me, my dear Master, out of pity for a mother and a father. But I... » the girl, a beautiful girl, almost a young woman, with large bright eyes and a pure intelligent face, stops, choked by tears, which from her long eyelashes, stream down her cheeks.

« Why are you weeping, now? » asks Jesus laying His hand on her hair.

« Because... I was told that You say that You will die... »

« Everybody must die, my girl. »

« But not as You say!... I... oh! now I would not have liked to be brought back to life, in order not to see that, not to be there when... that horrible thing will happen... »

« In that case, you would not have been here either to comfort Me, as you are doing now. Do you not know that a word, even one word only, of a pure soul who loves Me, takes all grief away from Me? »

« Does it? Oh! Then You must no longer be grieved, because I love you more than I love my father, my mother and my own life! »

« It is so. »

« Then come. Don't be alone. Speak for me, for Jairus, for my mother, for little David, for those who love You. We are many, and we will be more. But do not be alone. It makes You sad » and through motherly instinct, like every honest woman, she ends saying: « No one will hurt You if I am near You. In any case, I will defend You. »

Jesus stands up and pleases her. With His hand in hers, they cross the street and enter the synagogue by a side door...

### **“BLESS OUR CHILDREN”**

**(Vol. 3, p. 627)**

*(At Bethany, Jesus is with some crowds of people, including many women and children...)*

He bends to caress the children, who little by little have approached Him, leaving their relatives. Some mothers imitate them, taking to Him those who are not yet steady in their first steps, or sucklings.

« Bless our children, Blessed One, because we are lovers of the Light! » say the mothers.

And Jesus imposes His hands, blessing them. That brings about a bustle in the crowd. All those with children want the same blessing, and they push and shout to make their way through the crowd.

The apostles... become impatient and shout, reproaching and pushing back this one and that one, particularly the little children who have come by themselves. But Jesus says kindly and lovingly: « No, do not do that! Never prevent children from coming to Me, nor their relatives from bringing them to Me. Because the Kingdom is of these innocent souls. They will not be guilty of the great Crime, and they will grow up in My Faith. Let Me therefore consecrate them to it. Their angels are leading them to Me. »

Jesus is now in the middle of a crowd of children looking at Him ecstatically; so many little faces looking up at Him, so many innocent eyes, so many little smiling mouths...

### **JESUS AND LITTLE MICHAEL** **(Vol. 3, p. 751-5)**

*(It is a very hot day, and Jesus and the apostles are resting in a hay-shed near Emmaus, while the former shepherds Matthias and John - who were at Bethlehem when Jesus was born, and who are now His disciples - have gone looking for the peasants who own the property...)*

The peasants... have come back: men, women and children. And (Matthias and John) are with them. They see Jesus and His apostles sleeping on the hay, and their voices fade into whispers, so as not to awaken them. Some mothers smack their children who will not keep quiet, or they threaten to do so.

A little fellow, with the steps of a little dove and a finger in his mouth, approaches Jesus and watches Him - « He is the nicest » he says - while Jesus sleeps with His head resting on His folded arm as on a pillow. And all the rest, barefooted, on the tips of their toes, end up by imitating him. Matthias and John being the first, are deeply moved seeing Him sleep on the hay, and Matthias remarks: « As in His first sleep... He is now... our Master... then we loved Him only out of faith and because it is pleasant to love a baby. But now we love Him also because we know Him »...

The peasants go home, and the smoke rising from the chimney tells everybody that they are preparing food... Then silence envelops the house once again...

The little fellow, seen a short time ago, who is now beautiful in his very short shirt, the only garment he has on in this torrid hour, puts his little dark head out of the kitchen door, watches closely, and comes forward cautiously, with his tender little feet aching on the hot ground. His loose little shirt almost slips off his plump shoulders. He reaches the disciples and tries to step over them to go and look at Jesus once again. But his little legs are too short to get over the sturdy bodies of adults, and he stumbles, falling on Matthias, who wakens and sees the little face of the mortified child, ready to cry. He smiles, and understanding the reason for the little fellow's manoeuvre, he says: « Come here, I will put you between Jesus and myself. But you must be silent and still. Let Him sleep, because He is tired. »

And the child sits down happily, adoring Jesus' beautiful face. He looks at Him, studies Him, and is dying to caress Him and touch His golden hair. But Matthias, still

smiling, is vigilant and does not allow him. The child then asks in a low voice:  
« Does He always sleep like that? »  
« Always like that » replies Matthias.  
« Is He tired? Why? »  
« Because He walks and talks so much. »  
« Why does He talk and walk? »  
« To teach children to be good and to love the Lord, so that they can go to Heaven with Him. »

« Up there? How does one do that? It's far... »  
« Think about your soul. Do you know what a soul is? »  
« No! »  
« It is the nicest thing we have, and... »  
« More than our eyes? My mummy says that my eyes are two stars. Stars are beautiful, you know?! »

The disciple smiles and replies: « It is more beautiful than the little stars of your eyes, because a good soul is more beautiful than the sun. »

« Oh! Where is it? Where have I got it? »  
« Here. In your little heart. And it hears and sees everything, and it never dies. And when one is never bad, and dies as a just person, one's soul flies up there, with the Lord. »

« With Him? » and the child points at Jesus.

« With Him. »

« But has He got a soul? »

« He has soul and divinity. Because that Man you are looking at is God. »

« How do you know? Who told you? »

« The angels did. »

The boy, who was sitting, leaning on Matthias, cannot take in the news quietly, and he jumps to his feet asking: « Have you seen the angels? » and he looks at Matthias opening wide his big eyes. The news is so astonishing that he forgets Jesus for a moment, and he does not see that Jesus has half-opened His eyes, awakened by the boy's exclamation. Jesus closes His eyes once again, smiling, and turns His head round to the other side.

« Be quiet! See? You are waking Him up... I will send you away. »

« I'll be good. But what are the angels like? When did you see them? » His voice is a whisper again.

And Matthias patiently tells the boy, who is sat again in an ecstasy on his chest, what happened on Christmas Night. And he patiently replies to all the boy's questions: « Why was He born in a stable? Had He no home? Was He so poor that He could not find a house? Has He got a house now? Has He no mother? Where is His mother? Why does she leave Him all alone, since She knows that they wanted to kill Him? Does She not love Him? » A hail of questions, and answers. And the last one - to which Matthias replies: « His holy Mother loves Her Divine Son very much, but She makes a sacrifice of Her sorrow for letting Him go about, so that men may be saved. And to console Herself, She considers that there are still good men capable of loving Him » This brings about the reply: « Does She not know that there are good children who love Him? Where is She? Tell me, because I will go and say to Her: "Do not weep. I will give all my love to Your Son". What do you think? Will She be pleased? »

« So much, my child » says Matthias kissing him.

« And will He be glad? »

« Yes, very much. You will tell Him when He wakes up? » « Oh! yes!...But when will He wake up? » The boy is anxious...

Jesus can resist no longer. He turns round, with His eyes wide open and a bright smile, and He says: « You have already told Me, because I have heard everything. Come here, child. »

Oh! the boy does not need to be told twice, and he throws himself on Jesus, caressing and kissing Him, touching His forehead, His golden eyebrows and eyelids, with his little finger, looking at himself in His blue eyes, rubbing himself against His soft beard and silky hair, repeating at each discovery: « How lovely You are! Lovely! Lovely! » Jesus and Matthias smile.

Then, as the others wake up, because the boy is not so careful now about making too much noise, the disciples and apostles smile, seeing such an accurate examination by the little man in the bud, half-naked, plump, who moves blissfully up and down Jesus' body, scanning it from head to foot, and ends up by saying: « Turn round! » and he explains why: « to see Your wings » and when he is disappointed he asks: « Why have You not got wings? »

« I am not an angel, My child. »

« But You are God! How can You be God if You are not full of wings? How will You be able to go up to Heaven? »

« I am God. Just because I am God, I do not need wings. I do what I want and I can do everything. »

« Well, then, make my eyes like Yours. They are beautiful. »

« No. I gave you the ones you have, and I like them as they are. Ask Me, instead, to make your soul just, so that you can love Me more and more. »

« You gave me that as well, so You must like it as it is » replies the little one with childish logic.

« Yes, I like it very much now, because it is innocent. But while your eyes will always be the hue of ripe olives, your soul may change from white to black, if you are bad. »

« No, not bad. I love You and I want to do what the angels said when You were born: "Peace to God in Heaven and glory to men of good will" » says the boy, which makes the adults laugh, and the little fellow becomes mortified and quiet.

But Jesus comforts him while correcting him: « God is always Peace, My child. He is the Peace. But the angels were giving Him glory because the Saviour was born, and they were giving men the first rule to obtain the peace, which was to come from My birth: "to have good will". The one you want. »

« Yes, give it to me. Put it here where that man said that I have my soul » and with his forefingers he beats his little chest several times.

« Yes, My little friend. What is your name? »

« Michael! »

« The name of the powerful Archangel. Well, I give good will to you, Michael. And may you be a confessor of the true God, saying to persecutors what your angelic patron said: "Who is like God?". May you be blessed now and always » and He imposes His hands on him.

But the little one is not convinced. He says: « No, kiss me here. On my soul. And Your blessing will go into it and will remain closed, inside it » and he uncovers his chest to be kissed - without anything being interposed between his body and Jesus' divine lips.

All those, who are present, smile and are moved at the same time. And quite rightly! The wonderful faith of the innocent child, who has gone to Jesus, some may say by instinct, but urged by his soul, is really touching, and Jesus points it out saying: « Oh! if everybody had the heart of a child! »

Hours have gone by in the meanwhile. The house becomes busy again. The voices of women, children and men can be heard. And a mother calls: « Michael!

Michael! Where are you? » and she appears at the door and with fear in her eyes she looks at the low well, with a dreadful thought in her heart.

Jesus says: « Be not afraid, woman. Your son is with Me. »

« Oh! I was afraid... He likes to play with water so much... »

Jesus says: « And in fact he came to the Living Water, that descends from Heaven to give Life to men. »

« He has troubled You... But he slipped away so silently that I did not hear him...» says the woman apologising.

« Oh! no! He has not disturbed Me. He comforted Me! Children never disturb Jesus. »

## **BECOMING RESPONSIBLE**

**(Vol. 4, p. 90-1)**

*(Jesus is in a vineyard with His disciples, talking about free will, and how man uses this gift during his existence...)*

« ... When we had an animal body in the womb of our mother, God created a soul in Heaven to make the future man in His likeness, and He infused it into the body which was forming in the womb. And man, when it was time for him to be born, was born with a soul, which, up to the age of reason, was like land left uncultivated by its master. But when man reached the age of reason, he began to reason, and to tell Good from Evil. He then realised that he had a vineyard to cultivate to his liking. And he became aware that he had a vine-dresser in charge of his vineyard: his free will...

Now, what happens to souls? This. Man entrusts his soul to his will, to his free will, which begins to work the vineyard that had remained so far, a piece of ground without vines, a good ground, but bare of durable plants. During the first years of its existence only frail grass and caducous flowers had grown on it: the instinctive goodness of a child who is good because he is an angel still unaware of Good and Evil.

You may ask: "How long does he remain such?". We generally say: for the first six years. But in actual fact there are precocious reasons so that we have children who are responsible for their actions before the age of six. There are children who are responsible for their actions also at three, four years of age, and they are responsible because they know what is Good and what is Evil, and they freely want the former or the latter. The moment a child can tell a good action from a bad one, that child is responsible. Not before. Thus, a fool, even if one hundred years old, is irresponsible, but his guardians are responsible in his place, and they must lovingly watch over him and his neighbour, who may be damaged by the dull-witted or foolish fellow, so that he may not harm himself or other people. But God does not impute any fault to the idiot or fool, because unfortunately they are deprived of reason. But we are talking of intelligent beings, sound in mind and body.

So man entrusts his uncultivated vineyard to his vine-dresser: his free will, which begins to cultivate it. The soul, that is the vineyard, has a voice, and makes the free will hear it. It is a supernatural voice, nourished by supernatural voices which God never denies souls: the voice of the Guardian, those of the spirits sent by God, the voice of Wisdom, those of the supernatural remembrances which every soul recollects, although man does not have a precise perception of them. And the vineyard speaks to the free will, in a kind and imploring voice, begging it to adorn it with good plants, to be active and wise so that it may not become a wild, sterile, poisonous thicket of thorn-bushes, where serpents and scorpions nest, foxes have their earths and martens and other evil quadrupeds their holes... »

**JESUS NEEDS THE PRAYERS OF CHILDREN**  
**(Vol. 4, p. 280)**

*(Jesus is visiting two little children, Matthias and Mary, whom He has entrusted to the care of His disciple Johanna, and her husband Chuza - one of King Herod's stewards. Matthias has become warlike, in his talk of conquering the Romans, but Jesus persuades him against this kind of talk...)*

« You have Me hated, by saying such things. Are you glad if Jesus is persecuted? Just imagine how remorseful it would be if one day you had to say to yourself: "I made people persecute Jesus Who saved me, because I repeated what I heard people say by chance". They were men. And men often lose sight of God because they are sinners. As they do not see God, they do not see Wisdom and they make well-intentioned mistakes, or what they think such. But children are good. Their spirits see God and God rests in their hearts. Thus, they must understand things in a wise manner and say that My Kingdom will not be established through violence on the Earth, but with love, in the hearts of men. And they must pray, so that men may understand this Kingdom of Mine as children understand it. The prayers of children are taken to Heaven by their angels, and the Most-High converts them into graces. And Jesus needs such graces to change men, who think of war and of a temporal kingdom, into apostles, who understand that Jesus is peace, and that His Kingdom is spiritual and heavenly. See this little lamb? Could it tear anything to pieces? »

« Eh! no! If it could do that, father would not have given it to us not to have us torn to pieces. »

« Exactly, you are right. Also, the Father Who is in Heaven would never have sent Me if I had had the power and will to tear to pieces. I am Lamb and Shepherd. And I am as meek and docile as a lamb and I am He Who gathers with love, with the crook of a good Shepherd and not with the lance and sword of a warrior. Have you understood? And will you promise Me, just Me, that you will never speak of these things again? »

« Yes, Jesus. But... help me... because by myself... »

« I will help you. Look, I will caress your lips, and thus they will be able to remain closed. »

**“A CUP OF WATER IN MY NAME”**  
**(Vol. 4, p. 482-3)**

*(Jesus is at the Camp of the Galileans on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. He is asking Jairus, the synagogue leader from Capernaum, about a woman who has taken in a little baby orphan. While still talking, Jesus greets some children whom He knows from Capernaum and other places. One of the children tells Him:)*

« A woman has come and she gives lots of honey and caresses to children. And she bakes cakes for us. And the children who used to come to You, always go to her house to eat. And the last time she showed us a tiny little baby. She bought two goats to have milk. And she told us that the baby is the son of Heaven and of the Lord. And she did not come to the feast, as she would have liked to do, because she could not travel with such a little baby. And she asked us to tell You that she will love him with justice, and that she blesses You. »

The children of Capernaum twitter like little sparrows around Jesus, and they are proud that they know what not even the head of the synagogue knows, and that they have to act as ambassadors to the good Master, Who listens to them with the same attention as He would listen to adults, and Who replies: « And you will tell her that I bless her as well, and that she is to love children for My sake. And you must love her and not take advantage of the fact that she is good, do not love her only because she gives you honey and cakes, but because she is good. She is so good and kind,

that she has understood that those who love children in My name, make Me happy. And you are to imitate her, all of you, both you children and you adults, always bearing in mind that he who receives a child in My name, has his place allotted in Heaven. Because mercy is always rewarded, even if it is only a cup of water given in My name, but mercy on behalf of children, saving them not only from hunger, thirst and cold, but from the corruption of the world, receives an infinite reward... I have come to bless you before you depart. You will take My blessing to your women, to your homes... »

« But are You not coming back to us, Master? »

« I shall come back... But not now. After Passover... »

« Oh! If You are going to stay away for such a long time, You will forget about the promise... »

« Be not afraid. The sun may stop shining, before Jesus forgets those who hope in Him. »

### **THE KING, THE RICH MAN, AND THE POOR CHILD** **(Vol. 4, p. 615-20)**

The square in Emmaus is crowded with people. It is really packed. And in the middle of the square there is Jesus, who is moving with difficulty so much is He surrounded and pressed by those who are besieging Him... among them many children, as they can easily creep everywhere, like little lizards in the tangle of a thick hedge.

The attraction that Jesus exerted on the little ones is wonderful. Wherever He went, whether He was known or unknown, He was at once surrounded by children, happy to cling to His garments, even happier when His hand touched them lightly with a loving caress, even if at the same time He said grave things to adults; most happy if He sat down on a seat, on a little wall, or stone, or fallen trunk of a tree, on the grass. In that case, as they had Him at their own height, they were able to embrace Him, rest their little heads on His shoulder or knees, creep under His mantle, and thus find themselves in His arms, like chicks that had found the most loving and protective defence...

Even now the usual sentence of Jesus can be heard in defence of His little friends: « Leave them alone! Oh! they do not disturb Me! It is not children who cause trouble and grief! »

Jesus bends over them, with a bright smile that makes Him young, so that He almost looks like their older brother, a kind accomplice in some of their innocent amusements, and He whispers: « Be good and quiet, so they will not send you away, and we shall be able to be together a little longer. »

« And will You tell us a nice parable? » asks the... boldest one.

« Yes. One all for you. Then I will speak to your relatives. Listen, everybody. What is useful to the little ones is useful also to men.

A man one day was summoned by a great king who said to him: "I heard that you deserve a prize because you are wise, and you honour your town with your work and your science. Now, I will not give you this or that thing, but I will take you into the hall of my treasures, and you will choose what you like, and I will give it to you. In this way I will also judge whether you are up to your fame".

At the same time the king, approaching the terrace which surrounded his hall, cast a glance at the square in front of the royal palace, and saw a poorly dressed boy pass by: a child of a very poor family, perhaps an orphan and a beggar. He turned to his servants saying: "Go to that boy and bring him here".

The servants went and came back with the child, to appear in the presence of the king. Although the dignitaries of the court said to him: "Make a bow, salute, say: 'Honour and glory to you, my king. I bend my knee before you, powerful king whom

the Earth exalts as the greatest being existing", the boy refused to bow and repeat those words, and the scandalised dignitaries shook him rudely and said: "O king, this dirty boorish boy is a dishonour in your abode. Let us drive him out of here into the street. If you wish to have a boy near you, we will go and look for one among the rich people in town..."

But the king said: "No. I want this boy. Not only that, but I want to take him as well into the hall of my treasures, so that he may choose what he wants, and I will give it to him. I am perhaps not allowed, just because I am a king, to make a poor boy happy? Is he not my subject like each of you? Is it his fault if he is unhappy? No, God be praised! I want to make him happy at least for once! Come, child, and be not afraid of me" and he stretched out his hand which the boy took with simplicity kissing it spontaneously. The king smiled...

They went into the treasure room, the door of which was opened by two great men of the Court. It was a high, round, windowless room. But light flooded in through the ceiling made of a huge plate of mica. A mild light which, however, made the gold knobs of safes shine brightly, and the purple ribbons of many parchment rolls glow on high ornate reading-desks. Stately rolls, with precious rods, and clasps and labels adorned with shining stones. Rare works which only a king could possess. And, ignored on a grim dark low desk, a small parchment rolled on a white piece of wood, tied with a rustic thread, as dusty as a neglected thing.

The king said, pointing at the walls: "Here are all the treasures of the Earth, and others which are even greater than earthly treasures. Because here are all the works of human genius, and there are also works coming from superhuman sources. Go and take whatever you wish". And he stood in the middle of the room, with folded arms, watching.

The rich wise man went first towards the safes and lifted their covers with more and more feverish anxiety. Gold bars and jewels, silver, pearls, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, opals... were shining in all the coffers... cries of admiration were heard as each one was opened... He then went to the reading-desks, and when reading the titles, his lips uttered new cries of admiration, and at last the man, highly enthusiastic, turned to the king and said: "You have an incomparable treasure: the stones equal the value of the rolls, and the rolls of the stones! Can I really make my choice freely?"

"I told you. As if everything belonged to you".

The man threw himself with his face on the ground saying: "I worship you, o great king!". And he got up and ran first to the coffers, then to the desks, taking from both the best things he saw.

The king... addressed the boy who was standing beside him, saying: "And are you not going to choose the beautiful stones and the valuable rolls?"

The boy shook his head in denial.

"Why not?"

"Because with regard to the rolls, I cannot read them, and as far as the stones are concerned... I do not know their value. They are nothing but little stones to me".

"But they would make you rich..."

"I have no father, no mother, no brother. Of what avail would it be to me, to go to my shelter with a treasure in my bosom?"

"But you would be able to buy a house with it..."

"I would still be alone in it".

"You could buy clothes".

"I would still be cold without the love of relatives".

"Food".

"I could not become satiated with my mother's kisses, or buy them at any price"...

"What, then? Tell me, and I will give it to you, my boy".

"Oh! I don't think you can, O king, notwithstanding your power. It is not a thing of this world..."

"Ah! you do not want works of the Earth. Here, then: here are the works which God dictated to His servants. Listen" and he read some of the inspired pages.

"That is much more beautiful. But to understand it properly, one must first know God's language well. Is there no book which teaches that, that can make us understand what is God?"

The king was quite astonished, and did not laugh any more, but he pressed the boy to his heart.

The man instead laughed derisively saying: "Not even the wisest men know what God is, and you, an ignorant boy, want to know? If you want to become rich by that!"

The king looked at him sternly while the little fellow replied: "I do not seek riches, I am seeking love, and one day I was told that God is Love".

The king took him to the grim desk, where the little dusty roll tied with a string was. He picked it up, unrolled it, and read the first lines: "Let little ones come to Me, and I, God, will teach them the science of love. It is in this book, and I..."

"Oh! that is what I want! I will know God and by having Him, I shall have everything. Give me this roll, o king, and I shall be happy".

And the man said: "But it has no value moneywise. That boy is really foolish! He cannot read, and he takes a book! He is not wise, and he does not want to learn. He is poor, and he does not take treasures".

"I will strive to possess love, and this book will teach me. May you be blessed, o king, because you are giving me something which will no longer make me feel a poor orphan!"...

"At least worship the king as I did, if you think that you have become so happy through him!"

"I do not worship the man, but God Who made him so kind".

"This boy is the true wise person in my kingdom, o man... This child, who is cold and hungry, who is all alone, who has been struck by all kinds of sorrow, who would be excused and justifiable if he became intoxicated with the sight of riches, this child knows how to express just thanks to God, for making my heart kind, and he seeks but the one only necessary thing: to love God, to know love in order to have true riches, here and in future life. Man, I promised I would give you what you would choose. The word of a king is sacred. So, go with your stones and your rolls: multicoloured pebbles and... straw of human thought. And live trembling with fear of thieves and moths: the former the enemies of gems, the latter of parchments. And be dazzled by the vain flashes - of those chips, and be disgusted with the sickly-sweet flavour of human science, which is only flavour and not nourishment. Go. This child will remain with me and we will strive together to read the book that is love, that is, God. And we shall have no vain flashes of cold gems, nor the sickly-sweet flavour of straw of the works of human knowledge. But the fire of the Eternal Spirit will grant us, even in this life, the ecstasy of Paradise, and we shall possess Wisdom, which is more fortifying than wine, more nourishing than honey. Come, child, to whom Wisdom has shown her face, that you may desire her as a genuine bride".

And after driving away the man, he kept the child, and instructed him in divine Wisdom, that he might be a just man and a king, worthy of the sacred anointment on the Earth, and a citizen of the Kingdom of God in the other life.

That is the parable promised to the little ones and proposed to adults. »

## **JESUS APPEARS TO THE CHILDREN** **(Vol. 5, p. 799)**

*(Jesus has been arrested, tortured and Crucified on the Cross. On Easter Sunday He rose again, and appeared to a number of people who had been faithful to Him. One such appearance is to the children of Juttah: Mary, Joseph, Immanuel, and little Jesai - whose mother is Sarah, and the youngest being the baby whom Jesus named at the start of His public life:)*

(The scene is) the orchard of Sarah's house. The children are playing under the leafy trees. The youngest one rolls on the grass near a thick row of vine-leaves, the other bigger ones chase one another with joyful cries of swallows, playing at hide-and-seek behind hedges and vines.

Jesus appears near the little one, to whom He gave His name. Oh! holy simplicity of the innocents! Jesai is not surprised seeing Him there all of a sudden, but he stretches out his little arms, so that Jesus may take him in His, and Jesus takes him: there is the greatest simplicity in the acts of both.

The others arrive running - and once again the blessed simplicity of children! - and without any astonishment they approach Him happily. Nothing seems to have changed for them. They probably do not know.

But after Jesus has caressed each of them, Mary, the oldest and most sensible one, says: « So do You no longer suffer, Lord, now that You have risen? I was so sorry! »

« I no longer suffer. I have come to bless you before I ascend to My Father and yours, in Heaven. But also, from there I will always bless you, if you are always good. You will tell those who love Me that I have left My blessing with you today. Remember this day. »

« Are You not coming to the house? Mother is there. They will not believe us » says Mary again.

But her brother does not ask. He shouts: « Mummy, mummy. The Lord is here! » and running towards the house, he repeats that cry. Sarah rushes, she looks out of the window... just in time to see Jesus, very handsome at the edge of the orchard, disappear in the light that absorbs Him...

« The Lord! But why did you not call me before? » says Sarah as soon as she is able to speak. « But when? where did He come from? Was He alone? How foolish you are! »

« We found Him here. A moment before He was not here... He did not come from the road or from the kitchen garden. And He had Jesai in His arms... And He told us that He had come to bless us, and to give us His blessing for those who love Him in Juttah, and to remember this day. And now He is going to Heaven. But He will love us if we are good. How handsome He was! He had wounds in His hands. But they no longer hurt Him. Also, His feet were wounded. I saw them among the grass. That flower there touched just the wound of one foot. I will pick it... » they all speak together, excited with emotion. They even perspire in the excitement of speaking.

Sarah caresses them whispering: « God is great! Let us go. Come. Let us go and tell everybody. You, innocents, will speak. You can speak of God. »